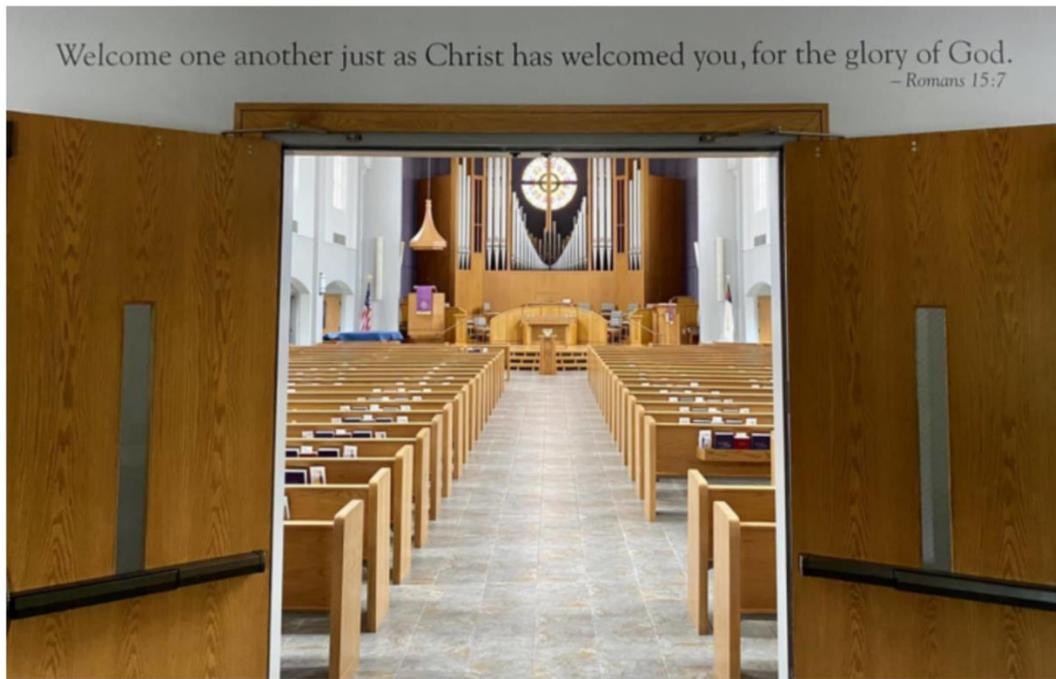




FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FRANKLIN, TN

MISSION STUDY

FEBRUARY 2026



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I. Introduction & Overview

Interim Pastor's Summary Successes and Challenges Facing FPC

First Presbyterian Church is blessed by a long tradition of faithful leadership, generous stewardship, and engaged discipleship. This congregation bears the marks of a people who have listened for God's call and responded with courage and grace. What follows is a pastoral reflection on strengths and challenges, offered in the spirit of theological discernment and hope.

Signs of Strength and Faithfulness

- **A clear call to intergenerational ministry.** FPC has a strong legacy of investing in children, youth, and families, a ministry that reflects the biblical vision of faith being handed down from generation to generation. As this priority continues, it is important to remember that ministry is not entertainment; it is formation in the way of Jesus Christ. FPC is well-positioned to keep this focus rooted in discipleship.
- **High energy and high satisfaction.** According to the Church Assessment Tool (CAT), FPC occupies the "Transformation Quadrant," a sign of vitality and readiness for faithful risk-taking. This suggests a need for a pastor who can serve as a strategic leader, discerning where the Spirit is leading and guiding the congregation into bold, faithful action, while guarding against complacency. To be effective, the new pastor will need exceptional communication skills and a well-developed pastoral care skill set.
- **A generous theological tent.** FPC is a theologically diverse congregation, held together by shared commitments to Jesus Christ, the Reformed tradition, and Presbyterian polity. This breadth is a strength, calling for pastoral leadership that can honor diversity, teach clearly, and nurture unity in Christ.
- **A remarkable capacity for healthy conflict.** Few congregations manage disagreement with such grace. FPC's ability to remain united in purpose amid differences is a rare and precious gift—a living sign of reconciliation in Christ.
- **Strong staff and pastoral support systems.** The congregation supports its staff well, and the Associate Pastor's work with visitors and new members provides clear pathways into the life of the church. This is a strong foundation for future growth and discipleship.

In short, FPC is one of the healthiest congregations I have served. The ministry of Rev. Dr. Chris Joiner, FPC's excellent staff, and the faithful work of this congregation together offer a compelling witness to what it means to be church. FPC is well-positioned to step boldly into a future under the leadership of Jesus Christ.

Shalom,

Rev. Edward (Eddie) Bellis, Interim Pastor

Challenges and Opportunities for the Next Chapter

- **Underutilized facilities.** The church's physical plant is a gift that is not yet fully engaged in ministry throughout the week. This represents a significant opportunity for community engagement and mission.
- **Regional Church.** FPC is a highly connected congregation, with members from across Williamson County and beyond. This geographic diversity presents challenges for connection and discipleship but also opens opportunities to serve as a regional hub for worship, learning, and service.
- **Changing patterns in Christian education.** Declining participation in traditional Sunday School reflects broader cultural shifts. FPC has an opportunity to reimagine faith formation in ways that meet people where they are.
- **Long-term financial sustainability.** While FPC is financially strong in the near term, demographic changes and aging membership patterns will require thoughtful planning to sustain ministries for the future.
- **Over-functioning staff.** Staff members often carry responsibilities that could be shared with the congregation. Empowering lay leadership will strengthen discipleship and community ownership.
- **Worship and music development.** Continued collaboration with the Director of Music and Organist can deepen worship, engage children and youth, and strengthen worship as a primary form of evangelism.
- **Senior adult and grief ministries.** As the congregation ages, intentional ministry with seniors and those experiencing grief and loss (for example, a program like "Grief Share") could serve both the church and the community.
- **Changing community demographics.** Williamson County continues to evolve economically and culturally. FPC must continue to listen carefully to its neighbors to serve faithfully.
- **Future staffing models.** As a congregation of approximately 525 members, FPC will need to assess staffing patterns that support mission, sustainability, and faithful stewardship.

Reflections on the Transition

Transitions are holy and challenging seasons. The departure of Pastor Chris coincided with changes in Presbytery leadership and communication systems, creating uncertainty in the early months of the transition. Bridge pastors Rev. Claire Berry and Rev. Warner Durnell served faithfully during this gap, and their gifts were a blessing to this congregation.

Throughout my tenure, I have been struck by FPC's genuine hospitality. Without needing to advertise it, this congregation embodies welcome. This is a church that understands the meaning of home in Christ.

Looking Ahead

First Presbyterian Church stands at a Spirit-filled threshold. This congregation would thrive with a pastor who is a strong preacher and teacher, a thoughtful administrator, and a strategic leader willing to take faithful risks for the sake of the gospel. Change will require courage, patience, and theological

clarity, yet FPC has already demonstrated a readiness to move forward when guided by a compelling, Christ-centered vision.

The church's story is still being written. The Word is still being proclaimed. The Spirit is still calling this congregation into new forms of faithfulness. The next season of ministry will require careful listening—to Scripture, to the Spirit, and to the voices of this community and congregation.

Theological Grounding for the Next Chapter

This Mission Study is rooted in the conviction that the church does not exist for itself, but for the glory of God and the life of the world. As the Confession of 1967 reminds us, *“The church is sent to be a sign in and for the world of the new reality which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ.”*

- **Scripture calls the church to discernment and courage:** “See, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19).
- **The Reformed tradition calls us to continual reformation:** *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*—the church reformed, always being reformed according to the Word of God.
- **The Book of Order reminds us of our purpose:** “The mission of the Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life” (F-1.01).

A Pastoral Word of Hope

First Presbyterian Church has been faithful, and God has been faithful to it. The next pastor will not begin a new story but will join a living, unfolding narrative shaped by the saints past and present and guided by the living Christ.

And may it be said of First Presbyterian Church that when God called, this congregation answered—not cautiously, not reluctantly, but joyfully, trusting that the One who calls is faithful and will bring to completion the good work already begun.

Pastoral Transition Team Reflection

The Pastoral Transition Team

Susan Burns	Emily Korab
Bill Carver	Jim Martin
Rich Crim	Verna Rydlund
Francelia Downey	Eddie Bellis, Ex Officio

The Mission Study of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin, emerged from a season of prayer, listening, and shared discernment. As the Pastoral Transition Team, we approached this work with deep gratitude for the church we love and a sincere desire to listen for how God may be leading us into the next chapter of our life together as a congregation.

From the outset, our work was guided by FPC's mission statement: *Responding to God's grace through worship, study, and service*. As the process unfolded, it quickly became clear that both the church's mission and purpose statements deserved focused attention. Through prayer, conversation, and reflection, our work ultimately reaffirmed both our mission and our shared sense of purpose. We saw clear evidence of the congregation's deep commitment to worship, study, and service, along with a strong and visible heart for outreach expressed through acts of service in our community and beyond.

Through a review of the church's history, examination of key documents and contextual data, and input gathered through the Congregational Assessment Tool and listening sessions, we found strong affirmation that this mission continues to resonate deeply with the life of the congregation. It therefore serves as both a theological foundation and a practical framework for organizing and presenting this Mission Study. Our identity remains rooted in God's grace, and our response to that grace continues to shape our common life.

For this reason, the Mission Study is organized around worship, study, and service as interconnected expressions of our calling. In each area, we sought to describe current practices, highlight strengths, and name emerging questions and opportunities as the congregation looks toward the future.

The team drew on a range of sources, including historical records, demographic and financial data, and, most importantly, the voices of the congregation. Input gathered through the Congregational Assessment Tool and a series of listening sessions played a central role in shaping this work. Throughout the process, we listened carefully for patterns of energy, hope, and concern.

Our goal has not been to provide a comprehensive inventory of every ministry, but rather to offer an honest snapshot of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin, at this moment in its life. We share this Mission Study in a spirit of humility and trust, confident in God's faithfulness and hopeful about the path ahead.

II. Who We Are: Our Mission & Identity



Mission Statement

Responding to God's grace through worship, study, and service.

*Adopted in August 2014
Reaffirmed in February 2026*

Purpose Statement

To joyfully follow Christ and respond to God's grace as an inclusive, multigenerational faith community by:

- Deepening discipleship through relevant worship and life-long learning
- Creating and nurturing congregational relationships
- Transforming lives and connecting with others through service

*Adopted in September 2016
Reaffirmed in February 2026*

III. Our Context: History, Congregation & Community

Understanding who we are requires attention to both where we have been and where God has placed us today. This section explores the history of First Presbyterian Church Franklin, the character of the surrounding community, and the congregational structures that support its life and ministry. Together, these elements provide essential context for faithful discernment as the congregation seeks to listen for God's leading in the seasons ahead.

Church History

On June 8, 1811, the Reverend Gideon Blackburn organized the Presbyterian Church of Franklin. The congregation began with forty-six members and initially worshiped in a location fronting present-day Fourth Avenue. In 1815, a meeting house was erected on that site, now located on the northern edge of the Old Franklin City Cemetery. Reverend Blackburn served the church until 1823.

By 1842, the congregation had purchased a lot at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Main Street in Franklin and constructed the first of three sanctuaries at that location. The original brick sanctuary included slave galleries. In November 1864, immediately following the Battle of Franklin, the building was dismantled and occupied by the Federal Army for use as a hospital. A second sanctuary was erected on the site in 1887. That building was destroyed by fire in 1905, and a new sanctuary was constructed to closely resemble its predecessor. First Presbyterian Church remained at the Fifth and Main location until the summer of 1994.

In 1986, the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee conducted a study to assess potential population growth and future church development needs. Williamson County, and Franklin in particular, emerged as a focal point. Considering significant congregational growth during the 1980s and early 1990s, and the presbytery's projections for new church development, the congregation voted to purchase twelve acres on Franklin Road at Mack Hatcher Parkway. The goal was to build adequate facilities at the earliest feasible date.

Approximately five hundred members relocated to First Presbyterian Church's third, and current, location at the intersection of Franklin Road and Legends Club Lane¹. On September 18, 1994, the present building was dedicated to the glory of God, continuing a long and faithful history of Reformed worship, Christian education, and mission, both locally and globally. The new facility enabled the congregation to expand its ministry within a rapidly growing community. While much of the construction cost was covered through a capital campaign, the church also incurred a mortgage.

In June 2015, the Session voted to undertake the capital campaign, *All Things Possible*, with a goal of \$1.5 million. The campaign focused on two primary objectives, foremost among them the elimination of the remaining mortgage debt, which stood at nearly \$1 million after almost twenty years. That goal was achieved even before the campaign officially began on October 11, when \$1,621,800 had already

¹ Seventy-five members of the congregation remained at Fifth and Main and formed the Historic Franklin Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). The two churches began to engage with each other again in 2009. Today there are several shared events, including worship activities, each year.

been pledged or contributed. By the final Sunday of the campaign, November 22, total pledges exceeded \$2 million, surpassing the top benchmark of \$1.75 million. On November 23, 2015, the church officially became debt-free when the remaining loan balance of \$837,180.30 was paid in full. A note-burning celebration followed on December 6 in the church courtyard. The remaining \$1.1 million raised through the campaign was used to address a variety of long-overdue facility improvements.

While the financial success of the *All Things Possible* campaign was significant, the spiritual renewal experienced by the congregation was even more meaningful. From the outset, participants committed to keeping Christ at the center of the effort. As the church sought to discern God's will together, renewal emerged in ways that extended far beyond financial outcomes. Working toward shared goals fostered a deepened sense of unity, gratitude, and grace within the congregation.

Following the celebration of the church's 200th anniversary, attention turned once again to the care of a facility approaching three decades in age. In 2022, after navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and extended periods of limited in-person gathering, the Session discerned the need for a two-year giving initiative. The *Glory to Glory* campaign was launched to support ongoing ministries while addressing key capital needs, including \$900,000 for Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS) repairs and \$50,000 in support of the church's ministry partner, NaCoMe Camp and Conference Center.

Throughout the campaign, members were invited to pray, "Lord, what do you want to do through me?" The response was generous. Through April 2024, the *Glory to Glory* campaign raised \$1,044,000 for capital needs and \$1,990,000 for annual ministry support. Together, the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin continues to glorify God, love God and neighbor, and welcome the transformation God brings, from glory to glory.

As the congregation has adapted to changes over more than two centuries, the legacy of the church's founders endures through a continuing line of faithful ministers, teachers, leaders, and members. Time and again, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin has demonstrated a willingness to serve all of God's people locally, nationally, and internationally. Today, we are part of a larger community that continues to evolve in significant ways, and though the context for ministry may be different than it has been in years past, the congregation remains committed to welcoming all and to reaching outward to share God's grace. Through worship, study, and service the church continues to embrace our mission and looks forward with hope to what God is calling First Presbyterian Church, Franklin to be and to do in the years ahead.

Church Campus

The physical campus of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin reflects both the congregation's history and its ongoing commitment to ministry within this growing and changing community. FPC Franklin is located at 101 Legends Club Lane, Franklin, Tennessee 37069. The campus is bounded to the north and east by the Vanderbilt Legends Club golf course, to the south by the Retreat at Iron Horse apartment complex, and to the west by Franklin Road (Tennessee Highway 31).

Construction of the current facility began in the early 1990s and was completed in 1994. The building was dedicated on September 18, 1994, as an offering to the glory of God. Situated on a twelve-acre campus, the facility includes a single-story sanctuary and the two-story main building, which serves as the central gathering and educational space. Together, the buildings total approximately 35,000 square feet.

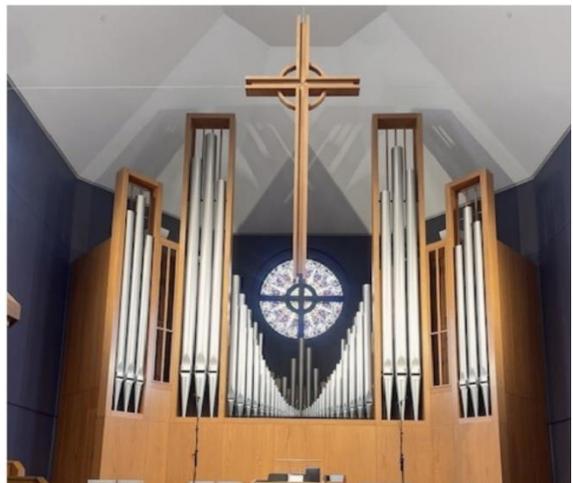
The site slopes gently downhill toward the north, and the sanctuary and main building are positioned so that the sanctuary aligns with the upper level of the main building. A paved asphalt drive and parking areas surround the buildings and provide access from two entrances along Legends Club Lane. At the southeast corner of the property, a covered pavilion is set within a grassy open space that supports outdoor fellowship and activities.

The upper level of the main building primarily houses adult education classrooms, the choir room, a kitchen, administrative offices, and an open gathering space used for fellowship between Sunday School and worship. The lower level includes classrooms dedicated to preschool, elementary, and youth ministries. A portion of the lower level is leased to Battle Ground Academy for its preschool program, which operates Monday through Friday during daytime hours. The space is also used by other community groups in the evenings, including Alcoholics Anonymous.

The campus features a thoughtfully maintained collection of labeled trees and grasses. The congregation is currently working toward recertification as an arboretum, reflecting a continued commitment to the stewardship of creation. The campus also includes a columbarium, providing a sacred and contemplative space for remembrance and reflection.

Architectural and worship elements within the sanctuary, including the organ and stained-glass windows, contribute meaningfully to the worship life of the congregation.

Oversight of the building and grounds is provided by the Facilities Committee, which meets six times each year to review current needs and plan for future maintenance and improvements. The committee has projected nearly \$1,000,000 in capital expenditures over the next ten years and has communicated these anticipated needs to the Session. The mortgage associated with the purchase of the property and construction of the facility was fully paid off in November 2015.





Fish Pond



Columbarium



Labyrinth with Pavillion in the background

Financial Summary

Operating Fund Performance

The Operating Fund — FPC’s primary budget for staff, ministries, missions, and facilities — recorded deficits in 3 of the last 5 fiscal years, ranging from \$9,200 to \$186,900. The last two fiscal years produced surpluses of \$107,700 and \$124,400.

Recurring income has remained relatively flat, in the range of \$1.0 to \$1.2 million. In 2025, administration expenses were \$638,900 (63% of total expenses), while facilities maintenance expenses were \$223,700 (22% of total expenses).

Operating Fund Statement of Activities

	FY 21–22	FY 22–23	FY 23–24	FY 24–25	2025* ¹
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Operating Fund Receipts					
Stewardship Income	1,079,200	1,114,200	967,200	1,119,700	1,066,250
BGA Lease & User Fees	2,600	52,500	32,900	43,000	48,250
Transfers & Other	7,800	(3,900)	30,900	300	9,600
Total Recurring Income	\$1,089,600	\$1,162,800	\$1,031,000	\$1,163,000	\$1,124,100
Non Recurring Income	38,700	117,600	114,100	4,700	8,300
Total Receipts	\$1,128,300	\$1,280,400	\$1,145,100	\$1,167,700	\$1,132,400
Operating Fund Disbursements					
Administration	878,900	821,700	804,600	690,600	638,900
Facilities Maintenance	206,600	215,400	221,300	220,300	223,700
Christian Education	34,500	36,700	29,000	18,500	24,600
Music & Worship	23,800	17,100	14,500	24,000	22,400
Missions	85,500	85,400	73,200	55,400	56,900
Presbytery Support	35,000	29,200	35,000	31,900	24,600
Fellowship & Care	8,100	19,200	9,300	10,300	6,300
Other	14,500	12,200	10,300	9,000	10,600
Stewardship Campaign	28,300	52,700	-	-	-
Total Disbursements	\$1,315,200	\$1,289,600	\$1,197,200	\$1,060,000	\$1,008,000
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$186,900)	(\$9,200)	(\$52,100)	\$107,700	\$124,400
Notes -	1. 2025 Actual is the 10-month fiscal year ended 12/31/2025				
	2. Fiscal 2026 is on a calendar year basis				

Designated Funds

Designated Funds support several activities within FPC such as:

- For Use Where Needed fund includes bequests, honoraria, and memorials.
- Specific Purpose fund supports missions, fixed asset replacement, the flower fund, Christian education, and fundraisers for youth ministry mission trips.
- Capital Campaigns fund account for the donations and expenditures of these fundraisers.

Between 2019 and 2025, non-capital Designated Funds supported \$889,900 in ministry, education, and facilities activities. Major uses include \$375,200 for Facilities and \$232,000 for Education. In 2022, we embarked on a 2-year capital campaign alongside our annual stewardship campaign. The Glory to Glory capital campaign raised nearly \$1.2 million and funded exterior repairs, fire panel upgrades, and a NaCoMe gift. Additionally, two generous gifts of over \$1.0 million, separate from any campaign, allowed for a complete organ construction and chancel renovation in 2020.

Designated Funds Statement of Activities

	Balance 03/01/19	Sources of Funds	Uses of Funds	Balance 12/31/25
For Use Where Needed				
Bequests, Memorials, Honors	\$40,200	\$240,300	\$184,400	\$96,100
Specific Purpose				
Facilities Support	(5,300)	441,200	375,200	60,600
Worship Service Support	9,600	38,900	35,900	12,800
Helping the Congregation	6,700	27,400	32,600	1,600
Educating the Congregation	15,400	245,200	232,000	28,700
Helping our Neighbors	24,600	142,300	130,200	36,700
Administration & Other	300	3,000	3,300	-
Occupancy Income	17,500	64,900	80,700	1,700
Finance Contingency	-	30,000	-	30,000
Total	\$68,800	\$992,900	\$889,900	\$172,100
Capital Campaigns				
Glory-to-Glory	-	1,176,100	1,176,100	-
Organ & Chancel Project	323,500	757,100	1,050,200	30,400
Other Capital	160,400	2,700	163,100	-
Total	\$483,900	\$1,935,900	\$2,389,400	\$30,400
Total Designated Funds	\$592,900	\$3,169,100	\$3,463,700	\$298,600

Financial Positions

Total FPC net assets increased from \$6.16 million to \$6.40 million since 2022, driven by investment performance rather than recurring operating surpluses. As of December 31, 2025, cash and near-cash holdings total \$618,100, equal to 5–6 months of operating expenses.²

Statement of Financial Position (Consolidated)

	Balance at Fiscal Year-End				Current
	02/28/22	02/28/23	02/28/24	02/28/25	12/31/25
ASSETS					
Checking Accounts					
Operating Fund	217,000	141,000	154,500	117,100	195,800
Designated Funds	289,100	187,600	293,600	442,900	307,700
Other Accounts	5,100	2,300	4,300	2,100	1,200
Total Checking Accounts	\$511,200	\$330,900	\$452,400	\$562,100	\$504,700
Other Current Assets					
Ppd Expenses/Accounts Rec	700	-	(6,200)	9,100	7,300
Accounts Receivable - Preschool	-	102,400	-	-	-
Total Other Current Assets	\$700	\$102,400	(\$6,200)	\$9,100	\$7,300
PC Foundation Endowments					
FPC Endowment (unrestricted)	249,900	211,100	246,100	289,400	325,700
Other Endowments (restricted)	668,800	564,700	659,400	722,600	784,000
Total PC Foundation Endowments	\$918,700	\$775,800	\$905,500	\$1,012,000	\$1,109,700
Total Fixed Assets	\$5,131,500	\$5,131,500	\$5,131,500	\$5,131,500	\$5,131,500
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,562,100	\$6,340,600	\$6,483,200	\$6,714,700	\$6,753,200
LIABILITIES					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable & Other	30,200	5,600	1,200	200	500
Prepaid Pledges (deferred income)	81,700	141,600	111,400	97,100	52,800
Total Current Liabilities	\$111,900	\$147,200	\$112,600	\$97,300	\$53,300
Designated Funds					
Where Needed	54,500	56,500	52,000	108,900	96,100
Specified Purpose	144,800	135,600	150,000	240,000	172,200
Capital Campaigns	90,400	1,600	91,500	93,300	30,400
Total Designated Funds	\$289,700	\$193,700	\$293,500	\$442,200	\$298,700
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$401,600	\$340,900	\$406,100	\$539,500	\$352,000
TOTAL EQUITY	\$6,160,500	\$5,999,700	\$6,077,100	\$6,175,200	\$6,401,200
TOTAL LIABILITIES and EQUITY	\$6,562,100	\$6,340,600	\$6,483,200	\$6,714,700	\$6,753,200

² Additional financial context is provided in Appendix A.

Demographics of Franklin and Williamson County

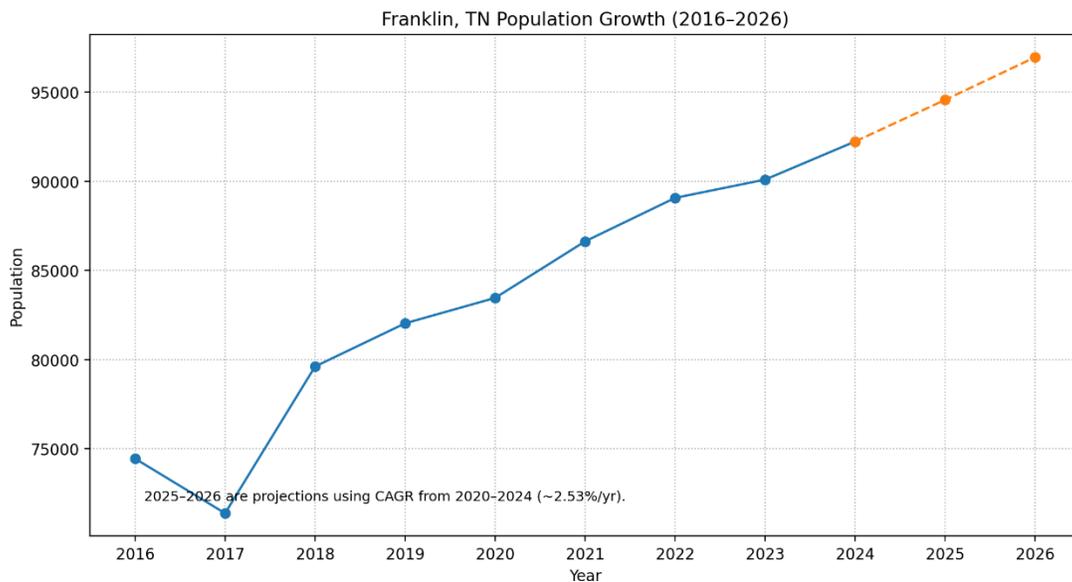
This section offers a demographic overview of the community surrounding First Presbyterian Church, Franklin, with a focus on Williamson County and the City of Franklin. The information is intended to support the Mission Study by offering a clearer picture of population trends, economic conditions, and social characteristics that shape daily life in the region. This context assists the congregation, its leaders, and prospective pastoral candidates in understanding who lives in the area, how the community is changing, and where opportunities for ministry and outreach may be emerging.



Population and Community Overview

Williamson County is among the fastest-growing counties in Tennessee, experiencing sustained population growth driven by residential development, economic opportunity, and in-migration. As the county seat, Franklin reflects these trends through continued expansion, increasing demographic diversity, and a strong local economy. Together, these factors define the environment in which First Presbyterian Church, Franklin is called to discern its mission and respond faithfully to the needs of its neighbors.

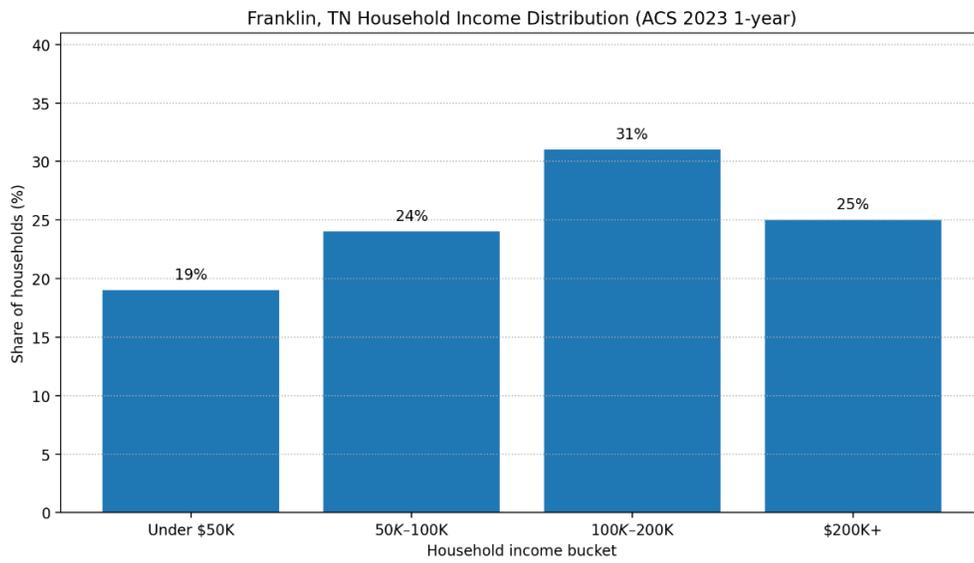
Williamson County has an estimated population of approximately 255,000 residents, while the City of Franklin is home to about 85,575 people, making it the largest of the county's five incorporated municipalities. The other municipalities include Brentwood, Fairview, Nolensville, and Thompson's Station. Both Franklin and Williamson County continue to experience steady population growth, averaging between 2 to 2.5 percent annually.



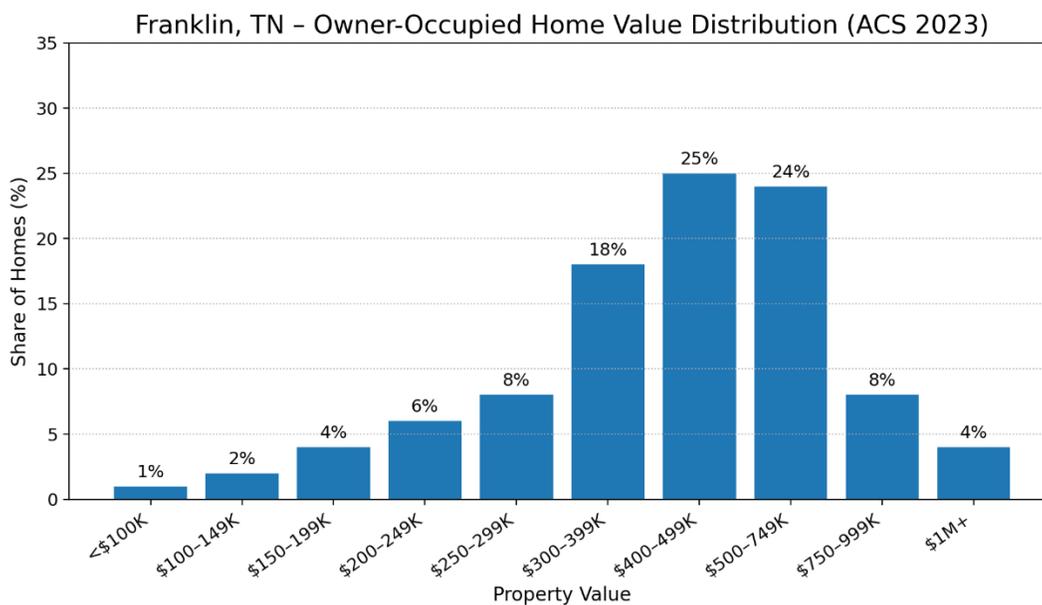
City of Franklin population figures from the Franklin's [2024 Development Report](#); 2025-2026 projections using 2020-2024 compound annual growth rate.

Economic and Household Profile

Franklin is an economically prosperous community, though notable differences exist across the county. The median household income in Franklin is approximately \$115,000 per year, compared to about \$131,000 for Williamson County overall. Despite this affluence, economic disparity remains present. The poverty rate in Franklin is approximately 4.8 percent, with women representing a majority of those living below the poverty line.



Housing costs are high throughout the region. The median property value in Franklin is approximately \$646,300, compared with \$673,700 countywide. Homeownership rates also vary, with about 64 percent of Franklin residents owning their homes, compared to approximately 80 percent across Williamson County.

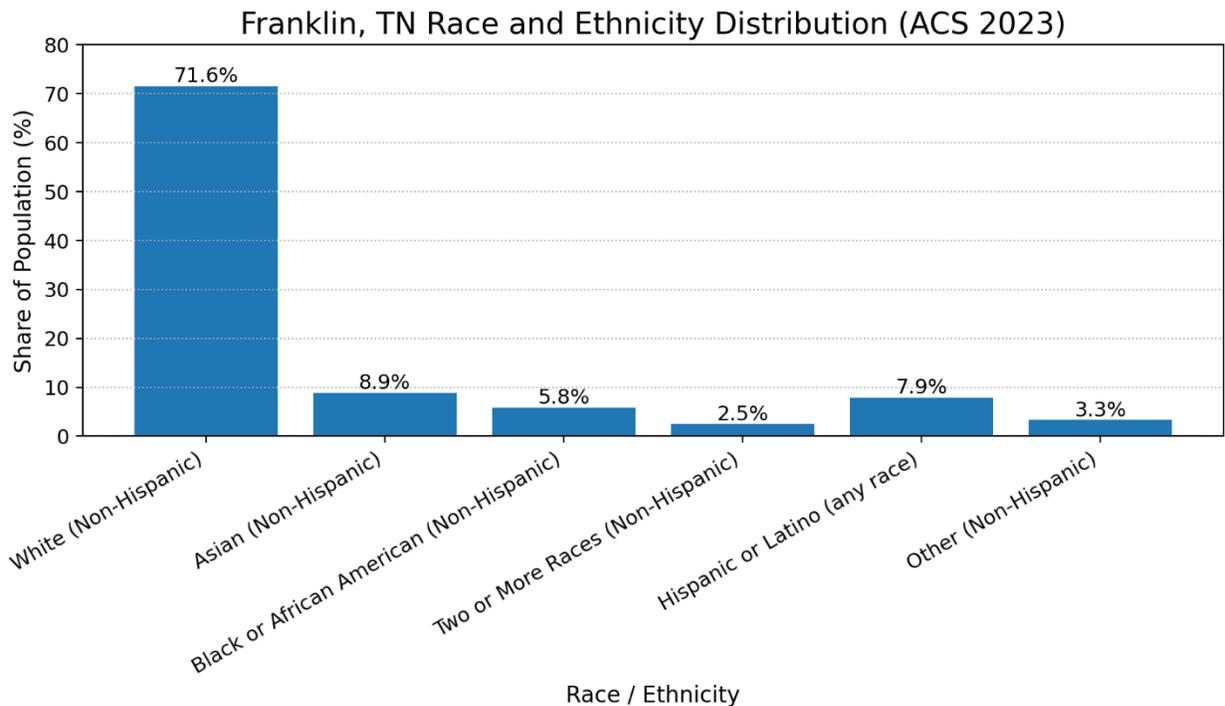


The median age in Franklin is 37.8 years, slightly younger than the county median of 40 years. This reflects the continued influx of families and working professionals drawn to the area by schools, employment opportunities, and quality of life.

Diversity and Employment

Franklin’s population reflects growing racial and ethnic diversity. The largest demographic groups include White residents (74.3 percent), Asian residents (8.9 percent), African American residents (5.8 percent), and Hispanic residents (7.29 percent).

Employment in the region is concentrated in management, business and finance, education, healthcare, sales, and office and administrative occupations. The presence of highly ranked public school systems and numerous corporate headquarters has helped attract and sustain a highly educated workforce.

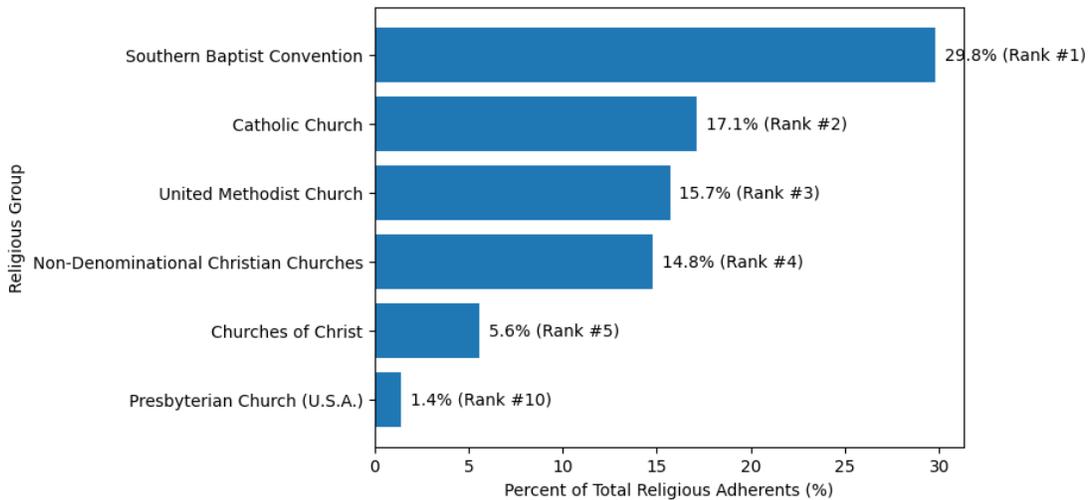


Religious Landscape

The religious landscape of Williamson County reflects both deep Christian roots and increasing denominational diversity. While Christianity remains the dominant faith tradition, patterns of affiliation and participation mirror broader national trends. Nationally, approximately 70 percent of Americans identify as Christian, yet only 36 percent regularly participate in worship, signaling a shift toward more individualized expressions of faith and declining institutional engagement. Locally, an estimated 55 to 65 percent of Williamson County residents identify with a religious tradition, suggesting that faith continues to shape community life even as expressions of belief and participation vary widely. Within the county, there are approximately 115 established places of worship representing a broad range of

theological traditions, alongside a smaller but growing presence of non-Christian faith communities. Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, and non-denominational churches make up the largest share of congregations, while Presbyterian churches represent a smaller but historic presence. Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and other faith communities further reflect the county’s increasing religious pluralism. Taken together, this landscape calls the church to prayerful discernment: to bear faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in a community where faith remains meaningful for many.

Top Religious Groups in Williamson County, TN (Percent of Total Religious Adherents)



Religious Affiliation in Williamson County: Top five religious groups by number of adherents, with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) included for contextual comparison. Data source: Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), U.S. Religion Census.

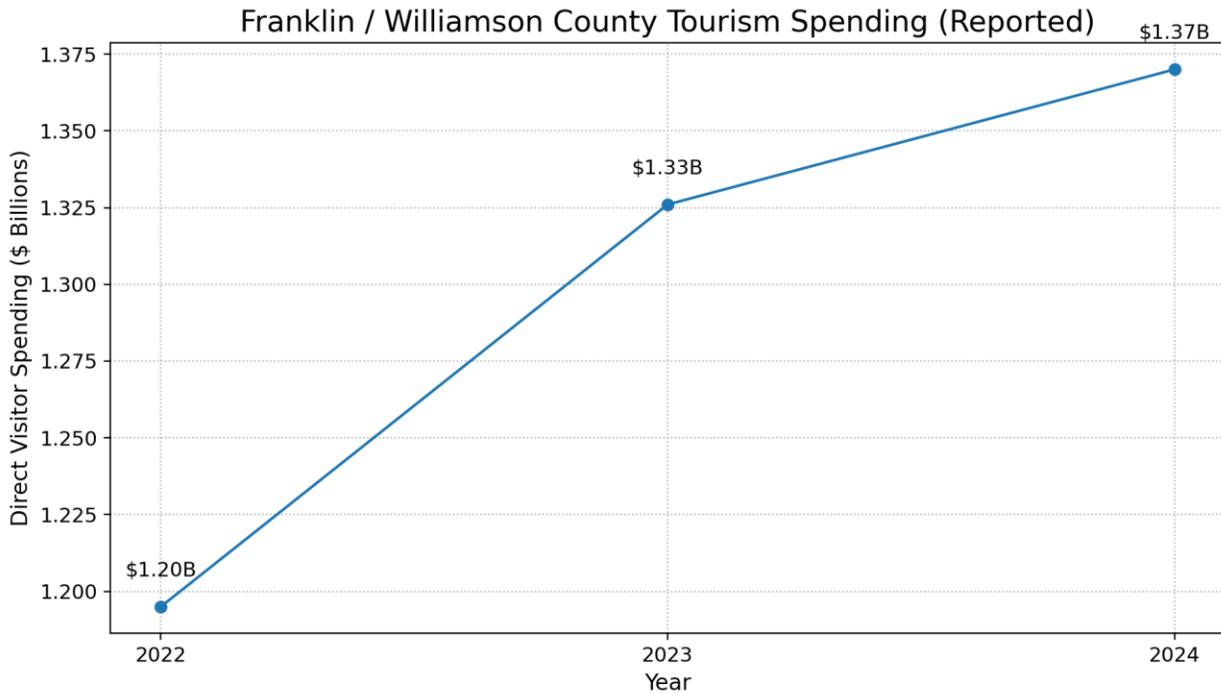
Education, Civic Life, and Public Safety

Educational attainment in Williamson County is notably high. Approximately 95 percent of residents hold a high school diploma, and nearly 65 percent have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher.

The county reports a violent crime rate of approximately 140 incidents per 100,000 residents, which is relatively low compared to national averages. Most residents commute to work by car, with an average of two vehicles per household. Politically, the county reflects a predominantly conservative electorate, with approximately 65 percent of voters identifying as Republican and 35 percent as Democrat.

History, Preservation, and Tourism

Franklin’s sense of place is rooted in its history and commitment to preservation, shaped in part by the Civil War battle fought there on November 30, 1864. Since the founding of the Heritage Foundation of Franklin in 1967, preservation efforts have revitalized historic areas, protected neighborhoods, and repurposed the former Stove Works factory as The Factory at Franklin. These assets drive tourism, which contributed approximately \$1.37 billion to Williamson County’s economy in 2024, with key destinations including Main Street Franklin, the Franklin Battlefield, and Leiper’s Fork.



Growth-Related Challenges and Opportunities

The quality of public education is a major contributor to Franklin’s prosperity and continued growth. Franklin Special School District and Williamson County Schools are consistently ranked among the top school systems in Tennessee and nationally, attracting families, businesses, and corporate headquarters.

At the same time, rapid growth has created significant challenges. Affordable housing is increasingly scarce, with approximately 10 percent of Williamson County residents experiencing severe housing problems. Many essential workers, including teachers, first responders, construction workers, and service employees, cannot afford to live in the communities they serve. To date, no comprehensive solution to the affordable housing shortage has emerged.

Growth has also intensified traffic congestion. Five major corridors feed into downtown Franklin, and surrounding areas experience frequent congestion, particularly during peak travel hours.

Implications for Mission and Ministry

Considering these demographic trends, key ministry opportunities include:

- Welcoming and integrating newcomers seeking community.
- Strengthening children, youth, and family programming.
- Expanding multicultural outreach and hospitality.
- Supporting seniors through companionship, caregiving, and pastoral care.
- Addressing hidden economic pressure, mental health strain, and social isolation.
- Building partnerships with local organizations and civic groups.

Conclusion

Williamson County and the City of Franklin are dynamic, growing, and increasingly diverse communities. While economically strong, these communities also experience real needs for connection, support, compassion, and outreach. First Presbyterian Church, Franklin is well positioned to serve as a place of hospitality, spiritual grounding, and community presence within this rapidly changing environment. This demographic overview provides a foundation for mission planning as the congregation prayerfully discerns its future direction.

Data Sources

For a more detailed and continually updated demographic profile, readers may consult [DataUSA](#) profiles for Williamson County, Tennessee, and the City of Franklin.

Data related to population trends, household income distribution, housing values, and race and ethnicity are drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates*, for Franklin and Williamson County.

Religious affiliation data is based on county-level religious adherence reporting from the [Association of Religion Data Archives \(ARDA\)](#), including denominational affiliation and percent of total religious adherents.

Tourism and visitor spending data is drawn from annual economic impact reports published by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and the Williamson County Convention & Visitors Bureau (Visit Franklin).

IV. Living Our Mission

IV-A. Worship: Glorifying God Together

In keeping with the mission statement of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin, we exist to respond to God's grace through worship, study, and service. It is God who claims us in the waters of baptism and who, through the power of the Spirit, gives us all that is needed to follow Christ in our common life. Our mission statement rightly centers us in this grace, and worship is our heartbeat. It is the place where our life together as a community of faith is grounded, where God's call and our response come together.



Preaching is central to the community's understanding of this call and response. For the past forty years, the church has been guided by two pastors who have placed the Bible in an interpretive conversation with the life of the congregation, informed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To paraphrase a former senior pastor's description of worship, the Word Incarnate comes to us through the Word of the biblical text and through the Word that encounters us in its interpretation. This understanding calls for careful study and preparation, with preaching directed toward listening for Christ's Word, proclaiming it with skill, and discerning with the congregation how that Word comes to life in our midst.

We revere a traditional liturgical format as a source of continuity and connection across generations. At the same time, we remain open to variation and unique expressions within worship. Musically, we celebrate our choirs, our new pipe organ, installed in 2020, and the legacy of the Presbyterian hymnal. On special occasions, worship may also include the handbell Carillon Choir, brass and percussion ensembles, strings (including violins, guitars, and piano), woodwinds, and other instruments. Regardless of musical expression, the focus of worship remains on Word and Sacrament, affirming that we are not an "audience," but a Christian community actively praising God and sharing in communion.

In addition to Sunday worship, five midweek services are offered during the Lenten season, along with funerals, weddings, and baptisms as circumstances require. Typically, the senior pastor preaches approximately fifty sermons annually, including special services. Ministers preside at the Lord's Supper on twelve Sundays each year, as well as on Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve, and other special or midweek Communion services.

FPC's Worship Committee works closely with the pastoral staff to support Sunday worship and special services throughout the year. The committee ensures that appropriate plans and resources are in place for both staff and volunteers, enabling the congregation to offer praise to God through the many roles that make worship possible. These include acolytes, livestream technicians, hospitality team members, Communion preparers, musicians, liturgists, bulletin volunteers, decorators for special seasons, and others who assist in worship leadership.

Membership and Worship Attendance

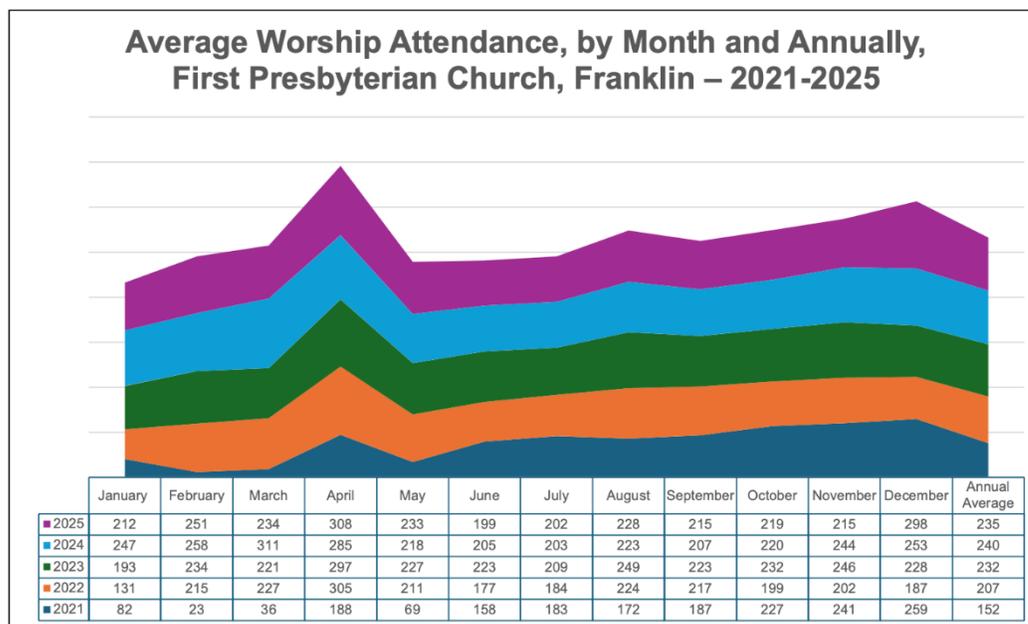
As of January 25, 2026, the total membership of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin is 551. Worship attendance patterns over the past decade reflect broader trends affecting many congregations, including changes in service structure, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a gradual return to in-person participation.

From 2011 through 2019, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin offered two Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. During this period, average combined attendance declined from a high of 389 worshipers in 2011 and 2012 to 294 in 2019, representing an overall decrease of approximately 25 percent.

In 2020, in-person worship was significantly disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in minimal in-person attendance. As in-person worship resumed, attendance began to recover gradually. Average attendance increased from 153 in 2021 to 205 in 2022 and continued to rise to 232 in 2023.

Beginning on November 27, 2022, the congregation transitioned to a single Sunday worship service at 10:15 a.m. Average attendance for this unified service was 232 in 2023, 240 in 2024, and 235 in 2025, reflecting a stabilization of in-person and online campus worship participation following the pandemic.

Attendance Trends



Average Worship Attendance by Month and Annually, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin (2021–2025). Attendance patterns reflect typical seasonal variations in congregational life.³

³ Additional Demographic and Statistical Information

For more demographic and statistical information, please consult the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Church Trends: <https://church-trends.pcusa.org/church/20537/overview/>

IV. Living Our Mission

IV-B. Study: Learning about and Listening for God's Word

Christian Education Mission Statement: *The mission of Christian Education is to engage the Bible in community so that its grace and promises can be heard afresh in each generation. Our Sunday School encourages questions, fosters a passion for the Bible, and instills a desire to grow in faith. We hope this desire lasts a lifetime.*



The Presbyterian Church has long embraced what Dr. Michael Jenkins, in his book *The Church Transforming*, refers to as a “thinking faith.” As Dr. Jenkins says so eloquently, “... at the core of the gospel is a thinking mandate—we call it “The Great Commission” — to go into all the world to make disciples... As a church, we have a duty, a mission, this commission: *to teach*, to kindle curiosity, to expand knowledge, to renew minds, to make our people wiser.” At First Presbyterian Church, Franklin (FPC), we take these words seriously. Since our founding in 1811, the congregation’s life together reflects a deep commitment to study and growth as we continually work to discern what God is calling us to be and do.

In keeping with the Reformed tradition and our stated mission of responding to God's grace through worship, study, and service, FPC continues to develop and deliver a wide range of learning opportunities for members and guests of all ages. We believe that ALL learners - members and guests, children, youth, and adults - engage in our community with their intelligence and experience intact. Skilled teachers and facilitators study Scripture deeply, present new concepts, and draw out the accumulated wisdom that comes to each of us through the grace of God.

Curriculum for children and youth is lectionary-based to enhance their connection to and participation in worship. While there is also a lectionary-based class for adults, adult offerings are more varied, with studies that explore the meaning and depth of Scripture, spanning both the Old and the New Testaments, and, at times, including the books considered apocryphal. We approach these studies confident in the wisdom of the Spirit to guide teachers, facilitators, and students alike and provide fresh insights and life direction to all who are willing and open.

In addition to the centrality of Scripture, we seek out other authors and teachers who can guide and assist us on our Christian journey. As resources are published and become available, or are recommended by friends, members, and trusted sources, they are carefully reviewed by the appropriate Christian Education Committee and the Session.

We do not fear controversy or challenge; in fact, we embrace them. If our faith cannot address and respond to serious challenges, it is hollow and without meaning. Similarly, we do not shy away from doubt. Somewhat counterintuitively, we welcome honest questioning, and we thank God for such a gift. We affirm that a strong faith grows even stronger through the fertilization provided by this process. There are countless examples throughout history of those who have struggled (and perhaps suffered) with the long dark night of the soul, where God seemed to be missing in action.

Our study is built around prayer and openness to the Spirit. We step forward into the unknown, the novel, and the unexpected with faith and trust. We welcome the surprise of new knowledge or insight. The anticipation of fresh learning instills in us an enthusiasm that drives participation in our offerings. Of course, numbers only tell a small part of the story. The spiritual growth of our members and guests can also be seen by the example of their lives and the words of their testimony.

We value learning and studying at every stage of life, and across all generations. From birth, our youngest are considered a valuable and beloved part of our community of faith. We take seriously the covenant promise to nurture our children in their faith, and they are included with love and respect in our community. We value and learn from all the seasons of life: our children, our youth, our young adults and new parents, our mid-life and senior adults. We endeavor to bring to each group meaningful and growth-centered Christian education. We also endeavor to learn together, across generations whenever there is an opportunity.

Most importantly, we remain open to the grace of God. We expectantly and attentively welcome all our members, guests, new members, elders, teachers and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

Christian Education Activities

Children's Education



Sunday School



Time with the Young Church



Acolyte Ministry

Sunday Wonder Hour (Ages 3 through Grade 5)

Children gather for Sunday Wonder Hour each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. A nursery is provided for infants through two-year-olds. Here they are well cared for, experience age-appropriate activities, and learn that church is a happy, loving place. Curriculum for children ages three through kindergarten is the *Spark Lectionary* (Augsburg Fortress), while children in first through fifth grade use *Feasting on the Word* (Westminster John Knox Press). These lectionary-based curricula are intentionally connected to weekly worship, allowing children to engage Scripture through storytelling, discussion, and creative response. Over the three-year lectionary cycle, children encounter texts from the Old Testament, the Gospels, and Acts as part of the life of the congregation.

Children’s Worship (Ages 4 through Kindergarten)

Children’s Worship offers a developmentally appropriate worship experience that emphasizes storytelling, hands-on engagement, and participation in the rhythms of worship. Using wooden figures and tactile materials, children are invited to encounter biblical stories as acts of worship, rather than lessons alone. This program is offered from September through May; during the summer months, children engage in selected storybooks, art activities, and outdoor play.

Acolyte Ministry (Grade 3 and Above)

Beginning in third grade, children may serve as worship leaders through the Acolyte Ministry. Training and guidance are provided throughout the year, reinforcing the connection between learning, worship leadership, and service.

Children’s Library

The Children’s Library, located in Room 101, offers a curated collection of books for use in Sunday School and for families to check out and enjoy together, supporting faith formation in both church and home settings.

Youth Education



Middle School Mission Trip



Nacome Fall Retreat



Study at Nacome

Youth Sunday School (Middle School and High School)

The Youth curriculum is *Feasting on the Word*, which follows the *Revised Common Lectionary*, connecting study directly to the Scripture proclaimed in worship. Over the three-year cycle, students explore texts from the Old and New Testaments, and from one of the synoptic gospels as the focus of each year: Year A – Matthew, Year B – Mark, and Year C – Luke. The gospel of John is read each year, primarily in Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Each Sunday, youth gather before class for fellowship, snacks, and announcements, strengthening community alongside study.

Confirmation

Students may enroll in Confirmation when they reach sixth grade. The course begins with an understanding of Scripture and includes information about the Reformed tradition, the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.), and First Presbyterian Church, Franklin. The primary curriculum is “Big God, Big Questions”. Because our faith is lived in community, each confirmand is paired with a Covenant Partner who walks beside them on this journey. Confirmands and Covenant Partners read the Gospel of Luke, and meet regularly to discuss their reading, explore other questions of the faith, and participate in service opportunities.

Sunday Night Summit (SNS)

Sunday Night Summit is the primary youth fellowship gathering and is offered throughout the school year. SNS is designed to strengthen community among youth while providing space for relationship building, faith formation, rest, and service.

Each month, SNS gatherings are intentionally structured around one of four focus areas: **Social, Service, Study, or Sabbath**. This rhythm encourages balance in youth ministry by creating opportunities for fellowship, outreach, learning, and rest within the life of the youth community. The Study component is recommended by the Director of Youth Ministries in consultation with the Youth Committee, and varies from year to year, allowing the curriculum to respond thoughtfully to the needs and questions of the youth.

Youth Trips and Retreats

Youth attend fall and spring retreats at NaCoMe Camp and Conference Center as a combined youth group of middle school and high school students. During the summer, middle school and high school students attend separate Montreat Youth Conferences. Service opportunities are also offered during the summer, with middle school and high school students participating in age-specific mission experiences that provide opportunities for hands-on service and reflection that link study, worship, and discipleship.

Adult Education

Adult Sunday School

Adult education offerings reflect a wide range of learning styles and interests, encouraging thoughtful engagement with Scripture, theology, and contemporary issues. These classes support ongoing spiritual formation and equip participants to live out their faith in daily life.

- **The Bible Class** is a video-based class that explores various areas of religious significance using resources from *The Great Courses*, DVD recordings by recognized scholars.
- **Christian Faith & Life** is a Bible study group focused on applying Scripture to daily life and supporting one another through prayer and fellowship.
- **Exploration** is a discussion-based class focused on exploring the impact of faith-based books on personal, family, and community life, with rotating leadership and new book selections twice each semester.
- **Feasting on the Word** offers an in-depth study of the weekly lectionary Scripture texts using the *Feasting on the Word* curriculum. The class follows the Revised Common Lectionary and encourages open dialogue connected to the Scripture proclaimed in worship.

- **Living Faith** is a video-based class that invites thoughtful discussion around faith and life in today’s complex world, using selected teaching resources to guide conversation.
- **Keeping Current as a Christian** is a discussion-based class that explores current events through podcasts and articles, encouraging respectful dialogue and reflection within a Christian community.

Summer Sunday School

During the summer months, a themed discovery class is offered for children, and a single lectionary-based class is offered for youth.

Adults participate in one rotating class each summer, led by pastoral staff and aligned with worship themes, reinforcing continuity across the seasons of the church year.

Additional Opportunities for Study and Fellowship



Women’s Retreat at Montreat



Wednesday Night Live



Adult 55+

Wednesday Night Live (All Ages)

Wednesday Night Live is a midweek gathering offered during the fall and spring that brings the congregation together for shared meals, learning, and fellowship. The evening includes adult study, youth gatherings, and creative educational activities for children, creating space for intergenerational connection and faith formation. Choir rehearsals are integrated into the schedule, and childcare is provided during study times to support participation across all ages.

A typical Wednesday Night Live schedule includes:

5:00 p.m. – Carillon Handbell Choir (adults and youth)

6:00 p.m. – Dinner

6:45 p.m. – Intergenerational and age-specific studies

6:45 p.m. – Chancel Choir (adults and high school students)

Childcare is provided for Wednesday Night Live activities between 6:45 and 7:30 p.m.

Intergenerational Celebrations

Intergenerational events such as the Advent Workshop and the Easter Egg Hunt intentionally bring all ages together as the congregation celebrates the seasons of the church year.

Adults 55+

This ministry offers opportunities for education, fellowship, service, and nurture, for adults fifty-five and older.

Growth Groups

Growth Groups meet twice each year in small groups for eight-week book studies. New groups form each February and September, with all groups reading the same book. These gatherings foster spiritual growth through shared conversation, discussion, and prayer.

Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study is open to men of all ages and meets on Saturdays at 7:30 a.m. in the FPC Parlor for coffee, donuts, fellowship, and thoughtful conversation around Scripture.

Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women gather monthly from September through May for Bible study, fellowship, and service.

Sisters in Spirit

Sisters in Spirit is open to women of all ages and meets weekly on Fridays for shared prayer and informal book discussion, offering encouragement and support to one another, the wider faith community, and the world.

Fall Festival

A joint activity with the Hard Bargain Association, children and adults of all ages are invited to dress up and participate in a trunk or treat, enjoy a meal together, and stay for a movie on the lawn.

IV. Living Our Mission

IV-C. Service: Embodying God's Love in the World

Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills Book of Order, F-1.0201.



As noted throughout this document, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin exists to respond to God's grace through worship, study, and service. This is our stated mission, and we believe it reflects God's mission of reconciliation in the world. For FPC, service is the natural outgrowth of worship and study, the place where faith takes flesh as we respond to God's call to be coworkers with Christ in his mission of healing and hope. Service is the concrete expression of our time, talents, and financial resources offered in response to God's grace, and lived out within the congregation, the broader community, and the world.

Grace also calls for deep attentiveness to human need, bringing the gospel truth of love to bear as we live among one another. By God's grace, our congregation is thriving in its service to others. That service takes many forms as we seek to meet the needs of both our congregation and our neighbors and partners in the broader community. Through ministries of outreach, mission partnerships, fellowship, and congregational care, we continue to seek to encounter and embody God's love and care in the world.

Service as Hospitality and Welcome

Through practices of hospitality and welcome, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin seeks to reflect God's gracious invitation, creating spaces where newcomers and long-time members alike are known, received, and connected into the life of the congregation.

Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee of First Presbyterian Church, Franklin supports the church's calling to embody God's love by extending hospitality, building relationships, and inviting the wider community into the life and ministry of the church. Through intentional welcome and visible presence, the committee helps create meaningful points of connection between the congregation and its neighbors.



Juneteenth Celebration



Fall Festival at FPC



Pumpkinfest Fall Festival

The committee carries out this ministry through a range of hospitality- and engagement-focused efforts, including:

- Welcoming new and returning guests through letters, phone calls, emails, gifts, and Inquirer gatherings.
- Hosting Welcome Centers in the Narthex and the lower level, where visitors can receive information about congregational life, and working to ensure that church grounds are inviting and accessible.
- Maintaining a congregation-wide name tag system to foster connection and familiarity.
- Maintaining and refreshing exterior lamppost banners to enhance visibility and hospitality.
- Hosting and coordinating Common Grounds on Sunday mornings in Wilson Hall, offering fellowship before and after Sunday School and prior to worship.
- Sharing information about First Presbyterian Church, Franklin through social media, print communications, and community engagement, including participation in [Franklin Pride](#), the [PumpkinFest Fall Festival](#), and [Juneteenth](#) celebrations at the McLemore House Museum.
- Partnering with the [Hard Bargain Association](#) to support its vital work to preserve the Hard Bargain African American neighborhood in Franklin and sharing in fellowship through our joint Fall Festival held at FPC.

- Providing a water and treat table on election days, when the church serves as a polling site, offering a tangible expression of hospitality to neighbors and visitors.

Fellowship Committee

Fellowship at First Presbyterian Church, Franklin is a vital expression of congregational life, shaping how members connect, care for one another, and grow together in Christian community. Through shared meals, seasonal gatherings, and intergenerational activities, fellowship extends the spirit of worship into the daily life of the congregation and nurtures relationships grounded in faith.

The work of the Fellowship Committee takes many forms, including:

- **Congregational Meals** – Regular gatherings such as Wednesday Night Live dinners, quarterly potlucks following worship, and the Dinners for Eight small-group program provide opportunities for members to gather around the table, build relationships, and welcome newcomers. The committee also coordinates bereavement meals and receptions, offering hospitality and compassion to grieving families.
- **Intergenerational Events** – Activities such as Pizza and Trivia Night, Sundaes on Sunday, and the Fall Festival engage participants of all ages, fostering joy, connection, and meaningful intergenerational relationships.
- **Seasonal Traditions** – Fellowship is woven into the liturgical rhythm of the church year through longstanding traditions such as the Maundy Thursday meal and the Easter Sunrise Breakfast, which invite the congregation to gather in community during holy seasons.

In addition to planning and hosting these gatherings, the Fellowship Committee oversees the logistical details that make them possible, including kitchen coordination and meal support. Looking ahead, the committee seeks to continue strengthening congregational bonds through hospitality, shared experiences, and intentional opportunities for connection across generations.

Service as Justice & Partnership

In its mission partnerships, the congregation understands service as a shared commitment to justice, accompaniment, and long-term relationship, responding to human need through collaboration rather than charity alone. Service is understood as an expression of faith and a response to God's grace.

Mission Committee

The Mission Committee guides the congregation's service and partnerships beyond the church, seeking to respond faithfully to human need through informed, compassionate, and sustained engagement. The committee strives to balance support for local, domestic, and global mission work while cultivating respectful, loving relationships with all neighbors.



Mountain T.O.P. 2025



GraceWorks Mobile Food Pantry



Cuba 2024

Mission Partners and Initiatives

The Mission Committee provides financial and relational support to a diverse group of mission partners whose work reflects the church's commitment to service and justice. Through these partnerships, the congregation seeks to balance its support for local, domestic, and global mission efforts.

Churchwide Initiatives

- Hosting three [American Red Cross](#) blood drives annually.
- Supporting the [GraceWorks](#) Manger by collecting and delivering Christmas gifts for families.
- Sponsoring families from and providing teacher appreciation gifts for Poplar Grove Schools at Christmas through [United4Hope](#).
- Maintaining a Basic Essentials Cart in the Narthex, with monthly collections distributed to [GraceWorks](#) and other mission partners.
- Coordinating the [Meals on Wheels](#) program, preparing and delivering approximately 125 meals during the first week of each month through a team of volunteers and drivers serving eight routes in Franklin.
- Hosting mission speakers as part of the Wednesday Night Live series to increase awareness of community needs and available resources.

- Supporting [Room In The Inn](#), which provides services to those experiencing homelessness in Nashville, for more than twenty years in a variety of ways.
- Serving as an emergency shelter site for the [Williamson County Homeless Alliance](#) during periods of extreme heat or cold.

FISH (FPC Intergenerational Service in Hope)

FPC Intergenerational Service in Hope (FISH) gathers at least monthly to support mission partners and respond to community needs through hands-on service opportunities designed for all ages. A central focus of FISH is forming disciples through service, with emphasis on helping younger members understand the importance of mission as an expression of faith.



Recent FISH projects have included:

- Assembling hygiene kits, school kits, and emergency cleaning buckets for [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's Gifts of the Heart](#).
- Serving breakfast to individuals experiencing homelessness through Downtown Presbyterian Church's [Fish and Loaves Ministry](#).
- Visiting [Crossroads Mission Care](#) in Dixon Springs, Tennessee, a retreat center serving first responders.
- Working with the [Franklin Lions Club](#) to assist with bagging sweet potatoes.
- Partnering with [UKirk](#) to provide an evening meal and opportunities for community building.
- Distributing food at the Graceworks Mobile Food Pantry and One Generation Away.

Domestic Missions

Each year, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin sends at least one domestic mission team to serve in areas of need within the United States. Recent efforts have included disaster relief through [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) and construction and home repair projects through the Appalachian Service Project. Locations have included Waverly, Tennessee; Bowling Green, Kentucky; New York City, New York; and Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

In October 2025, a team of fourteen members partnered with [Mountain T.O.P.](#) in Coalmont, Tennessee, to complete home repair projects and support a community Fall Festival.

The church also sponsors an annual Martin Luther King Jr. Intergenerational Service Learning Project each January. Recent trips have included Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Memphis; in 2026, the trip focused locally on civil rights history in Nashville.

Global Missions

First Presbyterian Church, Franklin has a long and faithful history of global mission engagement, beginning with member Lena Reynolds, who served as a missionary in Africa from 1932 to 1969. Today, the church supports global mission partners, including The Outreach Foundation and Living Waters for the World, and organizes international mission trips every other year.

The most recent global mission trip took place in Cuba in 2024, offering participants opportunities to engage with local communities and gain insight into life in diverse settings. Other recent mission trips have included Mozambique (2017 and 2019), Lesvos, Greece (2016–2019), the Mexican border (2019), and Lebanon (2020).

Other partnerships not mentioned above include: [BrightStone](#), [Bridges Domestic Violence Center](#), [BRA Foundation](#), [Feed America First](#), [Habitat for Humanity](#), [Hard Bargain Association](#), [Jiselle Lauren Foundation](#), [My Friend's House](#), and [The Society of Saint Andrew](#).

Taken together, these ministries reflect a congregation deeply committed to responding to God's grace through service that is relational, sustained, and grounded in faith. As the church looks ahead, the challenge and opportunity will be to continue discerning where God is calling us to focus our energy and resources most faithfully, particularly as community needs evolve and new partnerships emerge.

Service as Care and Presence

Through congregational care ministries, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin lives out a theology of presence, offering prayer, relationship, and sustained support during times of joy, transition, illness, and loss.

Congregational Care

Congregational care at First Presbyterian Church, Franklin reflects a deep commitment to sustained presence, prayer, and relationship across all stages of life. Through a wide range of ministries, the congregation seeks to ensure that members are known, supported, and connected, particularly during times of transition, loss, or need. These efforts embody the church's calling to care for one another as an expression of God's grace and love.

The Congregational Care Committee organizes and supports ministries that directly affect the life of the congregation, including:

- **Caring Connection Ministry** – When a member experiences surgery or a prolonged recovery, this ministry pairs them with another member who offers regular contact and encouragement throughout the recovery period.
- **Flower Delivery Ministry** – Flowers from weekly worship services are repurposed into smaller arrangements and delivered to members throughout the year.
- **Grief Book Ministry** – Following the death of an immediate family member, the church provides grief resources to members at meaningful intervals, including three weeks, three months, six months, and eleven months after the loss, accompanied by handwritten notes of care and prayer.
- **Growth Group Ministry** – This small-group ministry forms groups of eight to twelve participants each spring and fall, creating space for connection through shared study, conversation, and prayer. Groups meet both in person and via Zoom, supporting spiritual growth and fellowship.
- **Keep in Touch Ministry** – This ministry extends care to college students through seasonal outreach, including the delivery of care packages during the academic year, offering encouragement and connection while students are away from home.
- **Meal Ministry** – Meals are provided to individuals and families during times of illness, recovery, or other circumstances when support from the church community is especially meaningful.
- **Holy Stitches Ministry** – Members gather monthly to knit or crochet prayer shawls, praying for those who will receive them. These shawls are given to individuals experiencing physical, spiritual, or emotional challenges as a tangible sign of prayer and care. This ministry also provides baby blankets to newborns in the congregation and knits caps and scarves for our Mountain T.O.P. mission partner.

- **Visitation Ministry** – The Visitation Ministry coordinates regular visits with members who are unable to attend worship in person or who would welcome additional connection. Ongoing communication includes biweekly mailings with worship materials, church communications, and prayer concerns. Children’s artwork and cards are included during special seasons, and milestone birthdays (beginning at age 90) are marked with cards from the congregation, including the Session members, Congregational Care Committee members, the Visitation Ministry team, and any other group in which they have been active.
- **Welcome Ministry** – New members are paired with welcome families and invited to New Member Dinners held each spring and fall, supporting integration into the life of the congregation.
- **Volunteer Appreciation** – To honor those who serve in congregational care ministries, the committee hosts an annual Volunteer Appreciation Open House, celebrating the time and gifts shared by more than eighty volunteers.
- **Reach Out Ministry** – Cards are sent to members and regular attenders who have been absent from in-person worship for an extended period, offering encouragement and reaffirming their continued place in the church community.

In addition to these ongoing ministries, the committee periodically offers opportunities for members to reflect on their gifts and strengths for service. A program titled *Living Your Strengths*, based on the Gallup Strengths assessment, has been offered in the past and remains available as interest and need arise.

The Congregational Care Committee also oversees the creation of the church’s pictorial directory, updated every three years. The most recent directory was completed in 2024 through an in-house effort led by a dedicated subcommittee.

Looking ahead, the committee seeks to strengthen and sustain these ministries by expanding regular communication with members and regular attenders, including periodic postcards offering prayerful support and connection. Through these efforts, First Presbyterian Church, Franklin continues to nurture a community where care is shared, relationships are deepened, and no one is overlooked.

V. Listening & Discernment

First Presbyterian Church, Franklin Congregational Assessment Tool Results from Holy Cow! Consulting Executive Summary

The Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) was recently administered at First Presbyterian Church, Franklin. The church had excellent participation (246), representing 109 percent of the most recent average Sunday attendance (225). This level of participation offers a broad representation of the congregation. A summary of survey results is provided below.

Overall, approximately 65 percent⁴ of FPC members are clearly satisfied with things in the church. This, along with other information, indicates that the church has options which include growth, expansion, replication, and external impact. Whether any of these will be realized depends on the choices made.

Not every question is of equal importance to members. When asked how satisfied they are, members tend to focus on the issues addressed in the questions below. When they feel more positive in these areas, they tend to feel more positive overall.

- **The worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.**
- **Being part of this church community has given new meaning to my life.**
- **Our church provides opportunities for education and formation in a variety of ways so that I can find one that fits my complex lifestyle.**
- **Persons who serve as leaders in our church are representative of the membership.**
- **The whole spirit in our congregation makes people want to get as involved as possible.**

Conversely, when members feel less positive about the areas above, they tend to feel less satisfied with their experience in the church overall.

Every church exhibits patterns in its life that contain strengths and potential opportunities for improvement. FPC has potential strengths related to inclusiveness and advocacy. Potential opportunities for improvement include a tendency to intellectualize every issue and difficulty in establishing identity and vision.

Additionally, as noted below, the results indicate a strong desire to grow and make changes in certain areas. There are indications in the responses, however, that the church may not be as adaptable to growth and change as it could be. The congregation needs to be mindful of these potential stumbling blocks as FPC moves forward.

As members look to the future, their top four priorities are:

- **Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.**
- **Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.**

⁴ 65% answered with agree or strongly agree. Most of the remaining 35% answered with tend to agree, with a small percentage answering tend to disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

- **Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.**
- **Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society. (i.e., homeless, immigrant, transient persons)**

In comparison to other churches, three priorities that are unusually strong for FPC are:

- **Change or improve the music of the church to deepen our worship experience.**
- **Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society. (i.e., homeless, immigrant, transient persons)**
- **Work as an advocate for social and institutional change so that society might better reflect the values of the kingdom of God.**

These may warrant attention from the leadership even if they are mid-level priorities.

All the information in this report should be explored and validated in further conversation.

First Presbyterian Church, Franklin Listening Sessions - Consolidated Themes Executive Summary

The Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT) was administered to members of the congregation at First Presbyterian Church, Franklin between August 24 and September 10, 2025. The Executive Summary of those results are above. Four main priorities emerged from the survey:

- **Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.**
- **Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.**
- **Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.**
- **Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society. (i.e., homeless, immigrant, transient persons)**

To further explore these and related areas from the survey, and to ensure a comprehensive understanding of congregational perspectives in planning for the future, ten listening sessions were conducted between November 12 and December 3, 2025. More than 100 members of the congregation participated.

Sessions were facilitated in a consistent manner. They were 90 minutes in length, with leaders asking the same questions of each group.⁵ On average, 10 people participated in each session which allowed ample opportunity for all participants to share insights.

In addition to key findings from the CAT survey, we also learned that our congregation has a wide range of theological perspectives. Using a Theological Perspective Index - a measure of the degree to which members of the congregation hold more conservative or progressive views regarding such issues as the nature of the Scripture, the role of conversion in social change, and their relationship to the historic declarations of the church – we discovered that our congregation was a diverse group theologically. This was certainly borne out in the variety and range of insights expressed during the listening sessions

Themes that emerged from sessions included the following:

- Session participants initially chose FPC primarily because of proximity, invitation of friends or family, or because they were intentionally seeking a Presbyterian church.
- Reasons for continued engagement at FPC include the warm welcome from staff and the congregation, the strength of the relationships built, the strong sense of community, the substantive nature of the Christian education programs, vital youth programming, rich worship and Sunday messaging experiences.
- When asked about growth, session participants indicated that growth was important to ensure the longevity of FPC both spiritually and financially. Participants also noted how critical it was to attract young adults and families with young children if the church is to maintain our intergenerational strength long term.

⁵ See Appendix B: Listening Session Questions

- Participants were almost uniform in their agreement that growth was not just about numbers, but about continuing to grow spiritually, to engage meaningfully in ministry, and to increase FPC's impact in the larger community through continued participation in key community events and relationships in community organizations like the Rotary Club and Franklin Tomorrow.
- Addressing change, participants shared that for changes to be successfully received and implemented, they should be gradual, not made dramatically with little or no notice, and that communication about reasons for change should be consistent and thoughtful. They also noted how important it would be to seek to actively engage the congregation around changes whenever possible.
- When addressing programming and outreach, participants shared that both existing members and potentially new members could benefit from ministries that provide more formal support around areas like divorce, grief, well-being, single parenting, being a care giver, etc.
- Participants also shared qualities they felt were important in a new pastor. These included being a strong, caring leader who guides staff and moderates session and committees effectively; someone who values traditions while also bringing fresh perspectives and a vision for the future; an exceptional teacher who provides new insights to scripture in sermons; and someone who is energetic and eager to engage with and serve the broader community.
- Finally, given the strong support indicated in the CAT for educational programs, participants emphasized the critical need to engage a Director of Christian Education as the church works to effectively serve all age groups and life stages of the congregation. Participants also noted the significant connection between strong educational programming and our desire to intentionally and meaningfully grow our membership.

Appendices

Appendix A

Financial Context and Sustainability First Presbyterian Church, Franklin

CURRENT FINANCIAL CONDITION

FPC enters 2026 in a position of measured stability, with meaningful strengths—solid liquidity, strong designated fund history, capital campaign success, and growing legacy assets. Liquidity stands at \$566,200, equal to 5–6 months of operating expenses, a key indicator of short-term financial health. As of September 30, 2025, net assets total \$6.26 million, up from \$5.12 million in FY 2019–20—a gain driven largely by strong performance within the Legacy Funds.

SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Despite current financial stability, FPC faces sustainability challenges:

- Resolving the income-and-expense squeeze that has developed from FY 20-21 to FY 25-26. The church's recurring income has stabilized around \$1.1 million annually but has not kept pace with inflation. Rising administrative and facilities costs, which now are ~85% of the operating budget, continue to place pressure on funding capacity.
- Addressing \$400,000+ in Fixed Asset Replacement needs over the next three years. This funding need is separate from the operating budget and will require proactive funding strategies.

OPERATING FUND PERFORMANCE

The Operating Fund—FPC's primary budget for staff, ministries, missions, and facilities—recorded deficits in 5 of the last 7 years, ranging from \$9,200 to \$186,900. FY 2023–24 produced a surplus of \$107,700, most of which was allocated to Fixed Asset Replacement and contingency.

Income Trends

- Pledge Income peaked at \$1.17M in FY 2019–20, declined to \$871K in FY 2023–24 and is budgeted at \$1.06M for FY 2025–26.
- Though Loose Plate is down over time, dollar totals remain relatively stable compared with pledge swings.
- Occupancy income (BGA rent, user-group fees) is a growing source of income—\$43K in FY24–25, projected to reach \$54.5K in FY25–26.

Expense Pressures

- Administration is now ~65% of operating expenses annually with the FY 2025–26 budget of nearly \$800K. Facilities Maintenance increased from \$173K to \$253K, growing from 15% to 20% of total expenses.
- The shift toward administrative and facility spending reduces funding capacity for other program, mission, and worship activities.

LIQUIDITY

As of Sept. 30, 2025, cash and near-cash holdings total \$566,200, equal to 5–6 months of operating expenses. Nearly 55% of liquidity now sits in unrestricted Legacy Funds, indicating reliance on invested reserves rather than recurring operating cash flow.

FINANCIAL POSITION

Total FPC net assets increased from \$5.12M to \$6.26M since 2020, driven by investment performance and capital campaign activity rather than recurring operating surpluses.

DESIGNATED FUNDS

Designated Funds – non-capital include:

- “For use where needed” includes bequests, honoraria, and memorials.
- “Specified uses” support missions, Fixed Asset Replacement, the flower fund, Christian Education, and fundraisers for Youth Ministry mission trips.

Between 2019 and 2025, non-capital Designated Funds supplied over \$1.0M in ministry, education, and facilities support. Key uses include Facilities: \$343,800 (34%) and Education: \$227,800 (22%).

Designated Funds - capital campaigns are used to account for the donations and expenditures of these fundraisers. Major capital campaign outcomes:

- *Glory-to-Glory* Campaign: Raised \$1.2M+, funding exterior repairs, fire panel upgrades, and a NaCoMe gift.
- *Organ & Chancel Project*: Raised \$1.0M+; funded organ construction (~\$700K) and chancel renovation (~\$310K).

FIXED ASSET REPLACEMENT

The \$400,000+ in projected capital needs over the next three years includes replacement of the elevator, the gas-fired boiler, and the HVAC under the sanctuary. Ongoing HVAC replacements are \$28K–\$35K annually. Future major items: roof replacement (\$125K), EIFS maintenance (\$271K), and contingencies.

LEGACY FUNDS

Legacy Funds grew from \$716K to \$1.1M since 2020. While the annual growth rate was 7.9%, historical distributions were minimal. The unrestricted Endowment Fund has grown to \$319,300. The balance in the restricted Endowment Funds - which are donor intended to support global missions, scholarships, clergy loans, and special programs - is \$768,400.

Appendix B

Listening Session Questions

First Presbyterian Church, Franklin

- When you first came to FPC, why did you choose us?
 - What keeps you coming back?
- What does it mean to you when we say we want the church to grow?
- Why do we want to grow?
- What attributes or qualities do we need to cultivate at FPC that will facilitate the growth and change we seek?
- In the survey, we universally voice the need to grow/change as a priority, but there are indications in our responses that we may not be as adaptable to growth and change as we should be. How can we address issues of adaptability to change?
- Expanding outreach ministry emerged as a priority in the survey. What does that mean to you?
- Describe your hopes and dreams for FPC over the next 5 years.
- What qualities do you believe we need in our next pastor?